

for setting up of a Seismology Research Laboratory in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the proposal is being reconsidered particularly when Narmada Valley is experiencing the disaster of earthquake; and

(c) if so, the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (c) Sir, no proposal from the Council of Science and Technology, M.P., was received in 1993. However, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh had approached Government in India in 1993 for upgradation of earthquake monitoring facilities in the State. As a follow up, the India Meteorological Department, Government of India, has upgraded the Seismological Observatory at Bhopal by setting up a state-of-art broad-band equipment. This equipment is operational and recorded the recent Jabalpur earthquake of May 22, 1997 and generated data relating to the event.

[English]

Review of Performance of Steel Sector

1438. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the performance of the steel sector has recently been reviewed;

(b) if so, the details thereof in terms of standard norms for PSU and Private Sector units separately;

(c) whether the steel sector has sought Government's intervention to help them in exports, and provide financial relief because of depressing conditions in domestic market; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) The Ministry of Steel periodically reviews the performance of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under its administrative control only. The main parameters of review include interalia Memorandum of Undertaking (MOU) targets; performance of the previous years; expected performance with reference to modernisation/expansion programmes; other special and current areas of concern etc. The Ministry of Steel interacts with the private sector from time to time in order to ascertain their problems and to find solutions thereof.

(c) and (d) No specific request has been received from any producer for financial assistance for exporting steel. As per the Export-Import Policy, export of steel is freely allowed. However, Government has been taking

a number of steps to enhance exports of steel which include :

- (i) Full convertibility of export earnings at market rate of exchange;
- (ii) Facility available to Exporters to import their requirement of raw materials duty free under the Advance Licensing Scheme;
- (iii) Refund of the duty paid on any imported or excisable material used in the manufacture of export goods; and
- (iv) Exemption of export earnings from income-tax under Section 80 HHC.

CAG Report on Railway Projects

1439. SHRI MANGAL RAM PREMI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been invited to the newsitem captioned "CAG ne rail mantralaya ko aade haath liya, Pichli priyojnaye poori nahin hui aur nai haath mein li" appearing in the Dainik Jagran dated May 13, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The press report is factually correct as far as the contents of CAG report are concerned.

(c) New projects are taken up by the Government based on their perception of the requirements of new lines, gauge conversions etc. to provide the infrastructure for development. These projects are implemented alongwith other ongoing projects with funding as per prioritisation based on operation/strategic considerations. The main reason for the slow progress of all these projects is constraint of resources. Best efforts are made with the Planning Commission/Finance Ministry to increase the budgetary support so that these projects can be optimally progressed.

STD Booths In Rajasthan

1440. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANQDIA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of STD public telephone booths proposed to be set up in Rajasthan during 1997-98;

(b) the number of pending applications for allotment of such booths; and

(c) the number of post offices in the State, where such facilities are proposed to be made available during 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The target of STD PCOs in Rajasthan during 1997-98 is 6000.

(b) Pending applications as on 30.6.97 are 13298.

(c) No separate target is fixed for Post Offices. Eligible applicants with suitable space in Post Offices are also considered for allotment of STD PCOs by the STD PCO Allotment Committee.

Issuance of Free Railway Passes to Deaf and Blind Persons

1441. DR. A.K. PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are contemplating to issue free Railway Passes to the deaf and blind persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) At present concessions to Deaf and Dumb persons (both afflictions together) is already available to the extent of 50% in I/II/SL Class. Blind persons are also accorded 75% concession in fares of 1st, IInd/SL class, alone or with an escort.

Completion of Jammu-Udhampur Line

1442. SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of Jammu-Udhampur railway line alongwith the expenditure incurred thereon;

(b) the time by which the above line is likely to be completed;

(c) whether three years ago the then Railway Minister had announced that Jammu-Udhampur Railway Line would be extended upto Leh;

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(e) the estimated amount is likely to be required for this purpose; and

(f) the total length and estimated cost of the railway projects that are being taken in hand in Jammu and Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) The construction work on Jammu-Udhampur new line is in full swing. The expenditure incurred on this line upto 31.3.97 is Rs. 235.18 crores.

(b) By 31.12.99.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No survey has been conducted as such no estimated cost is available.

(f) Name of the work	Length (in Kms)	Cost (Rs. in Cr)
Jammu-Udhampur	53	331.52
Udhampur-Baramula	290	2500.00

[Translation]

Complaints about Bribes

1443. SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the incidence of taking bribes for executing the jobs pertaining to installation of telephone connections from one exchange to another;

(b) if so, the number of complaints received by the Government during 1996-97 till now in this regard;

(c) whether the Government have enquired into the said complaints; and

(d) if so, the action taken against the persons found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

World Bank Aid for Railway Projects

1444. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
SHRI SHIVAJI VITHALRAO KAMBLE :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has refused to finance some of the Railway projects during the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the World Bank has also refused to finance the second phase of the Mumbai Urban Transport Project; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, at the time of project identification, World Bank poses certain conditionalities and only after those have been accepted by borrowers, the projects are taken up.

(c) No, Sir. World Bank have not finally withdrawn from MUTP-II. World Bank had funded some project